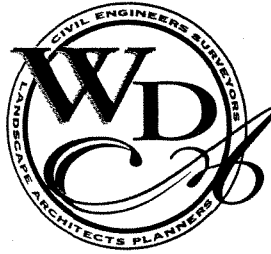


WATERMAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES, INC.



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August 23, 2006

Mr. Peter Ashton, Chairman  
Town of Acton Board of Selectmen  
Town Hall  
472 Main Street  
Acton, Massachusetts 01720

Via: Hand Delivery

Reference Site Plan Special Permit Application  
Exchange Hall  
Acton, Massachusetts  
WDA JN 197.01

Dear Mr. Ashton and Members of the Board:

On behalf of the applicant, Bluebird Realty Trust (BRT), we are submitting herewith an application and plans for approval of a Site Plan Special Permit for the redevelopment of 2 School Street, Exchange Hall and 129/131 Main Street in accordance with the provisions of the Acton Zoning Bylaws Section 10.4.1.1, Site Plan Special Permit Rules and the Acton Regulations for Site Plan Special Permits, effective February 27, 1990.

The applicant proposes the redevelopment of the existing property for the establishment of restaurant space to accommodate a seating capacity of 173 patrons and a function hall to serve 225 patrons. The restaurant and function hall are proposed to be located within Exchange Hall and approximately 1,250 square feet of office space (first floor) and 1,250 square feet (second floor) of residential space is proposed at 129/131 Main Street. Additionally, the existing residential building that is currently located at 127 Main Street is proposed to be removed as part of this redevelopment project.

Enclosed herewith, please find the following:

1. Twelve (12) full-size (24x36) copies of the design plan;
2. Seven (7) reduced-size (11x17) copies of the plan;
3. Site Plan Special Permit Application;
4. A check in the amount of \$3,500.00 to the Town of Acton for the application fee;
5. Stormwater Management Report, prepared by Waterman Design Associates, Inc. dated July 2006 (including soil test hole data);
6. Earth Removal Report, prepared by Waterman Design Associates, Inc. dated July 2006;
7. Traffic Impact Study, prepared by Conley Associates, dated June 21, 2006 (previously submitted under separate cover);
8. Certified List of Abutters;
9. Photometric plan prepared by Cooper Lighting/ Reflex Lighting Group dated 8/1/06.

For a number of years, Exchange Hall has been in a state of disrepair due, in part, to limited space for adequate parking and sewage disposal facilities to serve establishments. It has been the desire of

the Town and BRT to improve the appearance of the property. As a result of the communications with the Town, the opportunity to meet this objective and assist in the revitalization of South Acton is proposed with the redevelopment.

Through multiple informative and productive meetings and correspondence with the Town Staff, the Historic District Commission and the Board of Selectmen, our team incorporated Town comments to refine and finalize the design. On June 6, 2006 we met with you for an informal presentation of the project and met with the Historic District Commission on July 5, 2006.

#### *Other Permits and Variances*

There are no variances, permits or other special permits issued by any other Town Board, State or Federal Agency required pursuant to this application. A permit from the Acton Historical District Commission is required to allow for the proposed redevelopment. A demolition permit is required for the removal of a portion of the 129/131 Main Street building and removal of the 127 Main Street building from the property. The applicant will apply for a Demolition Permit for the work to be performed during the site preparation stage.

#### **Existing Conditions**

The project site is located at the intersection of Main and School Streets in Acton in the South Acton Village (SAV) Zone District and Groundwater Protection District Zone 4. Exchange Hall is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

#### *Historic Significance*

The site lies within the Historic District and is currently developed with existing buildings and site improvements including historic stone retaining walls. Exchange Hall was constructed in 1860 as a general store with a function hall located on the top floor. The building was constructed by James and Varnum Tuttle, Elnathan Jones, Jr. and J.K.W. Wetherbee and has operated in various capacities since. During its most prosperous era which ran from 1860 to 1900, Exchange Hall contained the largest business establishment along the railroad line between Waltham and Fitchburg. After the turn of the century, the building provided many diverse services to the community from light manufacturing, a commercial laundry, dance and martial arts schools, function hall, a meeting place and more. In 1986, through the efforts of the Town of Acton Historic District Commission, the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The adjacent property currently houses three apartments.

The buildings located at 127 and 129/131 Main Street were constructed during the same era as Exchange Hall and the 129/131 Main Street building was occupied first by Abel Jones. To the best of our knowledge, since their construction, these buildings have served as residences.

#### *Current Development and Use*

The property is currently developed on two lots that are in common ownership. Exchange Hall, the principal structure is located on the southern lot at 2 School Street of the locus property. There are two buildings located on the northern lot at 127 & 129/131 Main Street. The subject property is located on the Town of Acton's Assessors Maps as Map H-2A, Parcels 11 (northern lot) and 40 (Exchange Hall lot). The total area of the lots combined is approximately 39,911 square feet (0.92± acres) and the combined frontages total approximately 318.36'.

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The current uses of the existing buildings include both commercial and residential uses. Exchange Hall, a 3-1/2 story commercially used building, is currently occupied by Acton Woodworks, a design/build construction company, the Massachusetts Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu school and an art gallery and studio. The buildings located at 127 & 129/131 Main Street are 2-½ stories in height and are a residential use.

Motor vehicle access to the site is currently obtained from two points, one located on School Street and the other located on Main Street. The access and egress located on Main Street is provided with a dedicated traffic signal which is activated to allow egress when a vehicle prepares to exit onto Main Street. The parking on the property is not defined, somewhat random and generally contained within the paved and gravel surface areas. A portion of the paved parking area in the front of Exchange Hall encroaches into the road layout of School Street. An emergency vehicle access is located on the property providing the Town with the ability to access Nylander Way from School Street should the primary access to the area be obstructed.

The lot, on which Exchange Hall is located, has a drainage easement along the easterly property line of now or formerly Hale for the purposes of conveying stormwater runoff generated from the Mill Corner condominium development through a closed drainage system.

#### *Topography*

The topographic character of the property is uniformly sloping, quickly ascending from Main and School Streets to the developed portion of the site and slopes gently upward to the rear of the property rising moderately to abutting properties off Nylander Way. As shown on the Site Plans, there are historic stone retaining walls throughout the property. The site is predominantly developed with impervious or near impervious (gravel) surfaces. Some mature trees, some in various stages of decay, brush and sparse lawn areas provide the existing open space on the property. Along the easterly lot line of now or formerly Hale, a sparse hedge line exists adjacent to the School Street access drive.

#### *Stormwater Management*

The site generally drains towards Main Street and School Street via sheet flow and shallow concentrated overland flow. Much of the impervious area and roof runoff currently flows over land with very little if any, infiltration occurring over the site. There is no on-site closed drainage system nor are there any detention or infiltration facilities on the project site. The only exception is an existing catch basin that collects and routes stormwater runoff generated from the condo development into the municipal drainage system in School Street. The attached "Stormwater Management Report" presents the various design points along Main Street and School Street and details each drainage area.

#### *Utilities*

All buildings on the properties are serviced by the municipal water system. Exchange Hall and 127 Main Street are served by on-site sewage disposal systems and the building located at 129/131 Main Street is serviced by the Town's wastewater system. The buildings are serviced by overhead utility lines providing electric, telephone and cable television services to the buildings.

*Flood Zone, Rare Species, and Wetlands*

No portion of the property is located with a 100-year flood plain according to the Flood Insurance Rate Map for the Town of Acton (Community Panel # 250176 0003 C). No portion of this property falls within a designated area of priority habitat of rare species, wildlife or vernal pool, according to the Natural Heritage Atlas, valid from July 1, 2003. There are no wetlands or associated buffer zones located on the property.

**Proposed Conditions**

*Site Preparation*

The site preparation will include the removal of the east wing portion of the 129/131 Main Street building, along with the removal of the existing 127 Main Street building. Also included, is the removal of the existing site features and infrastructure. Initially, it is anticipated that the trees, shrubs and brush located within the limits of the proposed work will be removed followed by the installation of the construction fencing and erosion and sediment control measures. Earth removal and rough grading, pavement and retaining wall removal will commence followed by the abandonment of the on-site sewage disposal systems. Finally, the disconnecting and capping of existing utility services will occur in accordance with the requirements of the town and respective utility service companies. The site will be stabilized and maintained in anticipation of the construction activities.

*Site Redevelopment*

The proposed project entails the redevelopment of the property to accommodate a restaurant and a function hall to be located within Exchange Hall. A portion of the building located at 129/131 Main Street would cease to be used as a residential building and would be redeveloped to create office space.

Both Exchange Hall and the 129/131 Main Street building are proposed to undergo some internal improvements and some exterior changes that will be in accordance with the National Register, SAV District and Historical District Commission requirements. The buildings will undergo modifications that will provide for handicap accessibility.

Exchange Hall is proposed to be redeveloped to create restaurant space on the two lower levels and a function hall on the third and fourth floors. The restaurant space is proposed to serve 173 patrons and the function hall will accommodate 225 patrons. A small addition is proposed on the rear of Exchange Hall, primarily for the purpose of providing a reception area, an elevator system and internal staircase. This addition will serve as the building's principal access. The west side of the building will be redeveloped to provide for an outdoor gathering area while the front portion of the property will be transformed into a fence-enclosed "café"-style area for outdoor dining. These areas will be enhanced with landscaping in a manner that will provide ample shading for the patrons while maintaining clear visibility of the historic building from the public ways.

The proposed redevelopment at 129/131 Main Street will provide approximately 1,250 square feet of office space to be located on the first floor and approximately 1,250 square feet of 2- bedroom residential space will be retained on the second floor. The removal of a portion of the existing building will allow for the creation of parking facilities and handicap accessible ramp into the building.

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### *Grading*

The site grading for the project was established by the existing building elevations, the emergency access to the now or formerly Pert property, the existing elevations along the northern and eastern property lines, existing grades for the public ways surrounding the site and the requirement to comply with 521 CMR, the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB).

The proposed site access drives were designed to lessen the severity of the existing driveway grade. The Main Street drive is designed at a grade of 6 percent while the access drive from School Street is proposed at 5 percent with a transition to 10 percent. In the parking areas, a grade of 6 percent is proposed with the exception of those areas reserved for handicap accessible spaces. In these areas, the grade complies with the MAAB requirements, not exceeding 2 percent in any direction. It was necessary to introduce a retaining wall along the north and west property lines of the project site in order to contain the grading on site and a handicap accessible ramp is proposed to provide access to the office building. An ornamental fence is proposed at the top of the retaining wall to serve as a safety barrier.

The existing floor elevations in both buildings, to a great degree, dictated the grading adjacent to both buildings. The rear of Exchange Hall was graded such that any overland stormwater runoff is proposed to shed away from the building entrance into the closed drainage system located in both access drives. The parking area adjacent to the east side of the office building was graded based on the floor elevation and the allowable grade of the handicap accessible ramp.

The natural high point of the site is located at the northeasterly corner of the property. The site was graded such that this area would remain the highest part of the site where a high point is proposed in the driveway. All off grading associated with the development is contained on locus.

### *Earth Removal*

Earth removal calculations for the project have been included in the attached report. Generally, the project development will generate an export of material of approximately 1,650 cubic yards. The volume of export material is primarily due to the design of the parking areas and access driveways with grades that are in compliance with acceptable engineering practices and the MAAB.

### *Stormwater Management/ Water Balance*

As detailed in the attached Stormwater Management Report, the existing, predevelopment peak rates of stormwater runoff will be met by attenuating the post development rates in an underground stormwater detention facility. The redevelopment of the project will result in the introduction of a closed drainage collection system that will route the stormwater runoff underground into the underground piped detention system. This system consists of a series of deep sump hooded catch basins; drain manholes, and the underground stormwater detention facility. A decrease in the peak rate of runoff for all analyzed storm events will be realized.

Unlike the existing conditions stormwater system, the proposed system makes provisions for groundwater recharge. This system is proposed to route clean stormwater runoff generated from the roof tops into four infiltration systems located throughout the site.

### *Utilities*

Wastewater for Exchange Hall is proposed to discharge into the municipal system and the office/residential building will continue to discharge into the Town's system. Based on Title 5 design flows, it is expected that the office space will generate approximately 85 gallons per day (gpd) and the 2-bedroom residential space will generate approximately 220 gpd. The restaurant wastewater flows are calculated to be approximately 6,060 gpd and the function hall is expected to generate flows of approximately 3,380 gpd. In total, the wastewater discharge from the project is calculated to be approximately 9,745 gallons per day. The restaurant kitchen flows are proposed to discharge into a 3,000 gallon grease trap prior to discharge into the municipal wastewater system.

The buildings will be provided with separate domestic water supply and fire water supply lines. Based on the anticipated Title 5 sewage flows, water usage is expected to be 10-20 percent greater than that of the sewage flows and is calculated to be approximately 11,210 gallons per day.

The overhead electric, telephone and cable television utilities are proposed to be re-routed from the overhead connections through underground conduits to service both buildings.

Site lighting has been designed in accordance with the town's specifications. The poles have been located in the landscaped areas providing illumination to those areas of the property ensuring safety of on site motorists and pedestrians. The fixtures proposed are a traditional design and proposed with a foot candle distribution that results in minimal off site lighting. Please refer to the photometric plan prepared by Cooper Lighting

### *Waste Disposal*

Waste disposal for the project is proposed with the use of a dumpster contained within a stockade fence enclosure as shown on the site plan. The dumpster is proposed to be placed on a reinforced concrete pad and will provide for waste disposal for both buildings. The owner of the property will contract with a rubbish removal service. There are no hazardous wastes that would be generated by the establishments in the proposed development.

### *Parking and Traffic/ Pedestrian Circulation*

The redevelopment of this site was primarily dictated by the parking requirements of the project and the need to maintain efficient internal traffic circulation on the project site. The on-site traffic circulation was identified as one of the key components in the project design to avoid introducing traffic from the property into the public ways for the purposes of seeking out a parking space. The parking design for the project complies with the requirements of the SAV District. Unlike the current parking conditions, the parking area in front of Exchange Hall will be eliminated and the area will be redeveloped as a landscaped outdoor café.

The project was designed to utilize the existing curb cuts and provide for efficient on site traffic circulation. With the aid of Autoturn® design software, the Town's requirements and direction of Town Staff, WDA ran simulations of the SU-30 (Single Unit-30' radius) vehicle for emergency apparatus and rubbish removal vehicles. The fire apparatus can access the site from both Main and School Streets and can traverse the property from the School Street access to the Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) that currently exists on the Mill Corner condominium property. The rubbish removal vehicle can approach the dumpster from either access driveway.

The Exchange Hall portion of the project is designed with the intent of providing valet parking services to the School Street and commuter rail lots. The valet parking drop off spaces will also serve as parking spaces as discussed and agreed upon with Town Staff. As shown on the Site plans, the valet parking spaces will operate from the hours of 5 o'clock p.m. to closing.

The loading and off loading of supplies to the establishments within Exchange Hall will occur behind the building. This location is ideal due its proximity to the elevator and is located in an area that will not inhibit vehicle maneuvers in the access driveways.

The site plans, in conjunction with the town owned lot at 13 School Street (currently under construction), provides for 48 parking spaces. On site, 23 spaces (2 handicap accessible) are provided while the School Street lot, to be designed by the town, will provide 25 spaces which proposes 1 handicap accessible space. As shown on the plans, the total required parking spaces for the restaurant and office/ residential space combined is 46 spaces; the parking required for the function hall is 39 spaces. As discussed with the Town, the commuter rail lot can be made available to provide parking for the function hall. Based on the previously submitted Traffic Impact Study by Conley Associates, 100 parking spaces are available weekdays after 6:30 PM and all day Saturday and Sunday and therefore, it is proposed that the function hall hours of operation will be determined by the availability of parking at the commuter lot.

Pedestrian circulation from the proposed parking on the School Street property will be provided via a walkway from School Street along the east side of the building and via internal sidewalks through the site. Pedestrian circulation from the proposed parking within the commuter rail parking lot will be provided by existing sidewalks and pedestrian crossings on Main Street.

#### *Landscaping*

The landscape and hardscape improvements are proposed to be of a traditional nature, incorporating a balance of ornamental trees and shrubs with areas of concrete pavers, traditional stairs and fences. The area located to the front of Exchange Hall has been redeveloped from a paved parking area to a café area where a significant landscaping strip has been introduced. Landscape strips around the perimeter of all parking and site access drives are proposed. As has been discussed with Town Officials, the landscaping for the property in front of Exchange Hall will extend into the town right of way of School Street to allow for the continuous landscaping of the entire area. This location will be landscaped with ornamental trees and shrubs that are spray and salt tolerant as well as drought resistant. In our discussions with Town officials, it was determined that BRT or its assigns will maintain the landscaped area within the right of way.

#### *Erosion and Sediment Control/ Project Phasing*

The erosion and sediment control measures are shown and detailed on the Site Plans. Erosion and sediment control measures will be implemented prior to earth removal and will be maintained throughout the construction process. Said measures will consist of haybale and siltation fence barriers, silt sacks for catch basins and drop inlets, and anti-tracking pads at the construction entrances. As site conditions dictate during construction, temporary slope stabilization, diversion swales, temporary sediment basins and similar forms of mitigation will be installed.

Due to the site constraints and constant shifting of stockpile and staging areas, a phasing plan siting these locations is not proposed. However, a general sequence of events is anticipated as follows:

- Cut and remove trees and shrubs
- Install erosion and sediment control barriers and measures inclusive of anti-tracking pad at the construction entrances
- Grub stumps and properly dispose
- Remove and/or disconnect existing utilities and infrastructure in accordance with local, state and respective utility company requirements
- Rough grade site
- Install new utilities and infrastructure
- Pour concrete foundation and install exterior stairs for Exchange Hall and form and pour stairs and ramp for the office building
- Frame and enclose Exchange Hall addition
- Construct retaining walls
- Form and pour cement concrete walkways and curbing, and install pavers and fences
- Apply binder course to parking areas and access drives
- Install light poles and fixtures
- Exterior finishes to buildings and continue interior renovations
- Final grade and landscape

#### *Project Benefits*

The project will provide positive aesthetic and fiscal benefits for the community. The "face-lift" on the exterior of both buildings coupled with the proposed landscaping improvements will provide pedestrians and motorists with a greater sense of historic Acton. Revenue for the Town will be generated through the agreement established between the Town and BRT for the School Street parking lot and the real estate tax generated from the establishments in the two buildings.

We thank you in advance for your attention to the enclosed application and supporting materials. We look forward to the permitting process with the Board of Selectmen for the Exchange Hall project.

Very truly yours,

Waterman Design Associates, Inc.

  
Wayne M. Belec  
Project Manager

cc: Mr. Garry Rhodes, Building Commissioner  
Mr. Roland Bartl, Town Planner  
Mr. Bruce Stamski, Town Engineer  
Mr. Glenn Berger, Bluebird Realty Trust

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Town of Acton

APPLICATION FOR SITE PLAN SPECIAL PERMIT

To The

Board Of Selectmen

Refer to the "Rules and Regulations for Site Plan Special Permits" available from the Office of the Board or the Site Plan Coordinator for details on the information and fees required for this application. Contact the Site Plan Coordinator at 264-9632 with any questions concerning the Rules. Incomplete applications may be denied.

*Please type or print your application.*

**APPLICANT'S**

**Name & Address**

Bluebird Realty Trust  
2 School Street  
Acton, MA 01720

**Telephone**

978-263-0222

**OWNER'S**

**Name & Address**

Same as applicant.

**Telephone**

**Location and Street Address of Site**

2 School Street  
127, 129 & 131 Main Street

**Tax Map & Parcel Number**

Map H-2A, Parcels 11 & 40

Area of Site 0.92 ac.

**Zoning District**

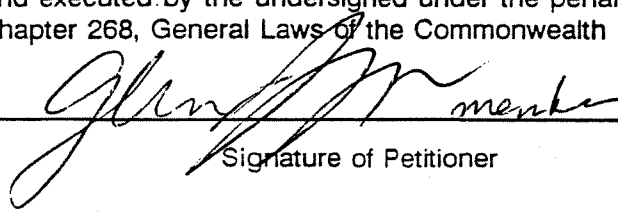
South Acton Village (SAV) Zone  
Groundwater Protection District Zone 4  
If any site plans have been filed previously for this  
site give file numbers:

The undersigned hereby apply to the Board of Selectmen for a public hearing and a site plan special permit under Section 10.4 of the Zoning Bylaw approving the attached site plan.

The undersigned hereby certify that the information on this application and plans submitted herewith is correct, and that all applicable provisions of Statutes, Regulations, and Bylaws will be complied with.

The above is subscribed to and executed by the undersigned under the penalties of perjury in accordance with Section 1-A of Chapter 268, General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

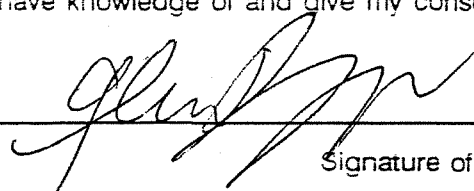
8/25/06  
Date

  
Signature of Petitioner

**OWNER'S KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT**

I hereby assert that I have knowledge of and give my consent to the application presented above.

8/25/06  
Date

 Bluebird Realty Trust  
Signature of Owner Main St Acton Corp